

Congressman Michael T. McCaul (R-TX)
Ranking Member, Adjudicatory Subcommittee
Committee on Standards of Official Conduct

Opening Remarks as Prepared
November 15, 2010, 9:00am EDT

As I stated at the opening hearing last July, this is an important day, both for Mr. Rangel, for this Committee, for the Congress, but most importantly for the American people. Let me be clear, no member of this committee asked for this assignment. Sitting in judgment of a fellow member and colleague is very difficult for all of us. But we accept our responsibility here today. We serve for no other reason than to protect the honor, integrity and credibility of this institution often referred to as the People's House.

The American people's confidence in us is at historic lows. They want their elected representatives held accountable for their actions just as they are held accountable as private citizens. It is my sincere hope that these public, televised hearings will help increase transparency and accountability and restore much needed trust in the House as an institution.

Our responsibility as Judges in this matter is to be fair and impartial. There is no place for presumed guilt before innocence in this process and there will not be in this case.

Hearings of this kind are rare and historic. These hearings follow a 21 month long bi-partisan investigation. An investigation that received sworn testimony from nearly 50 witnesses, and over 28,000 pages of documents. An investigation that produced a 13 Count Statement of Alleged Violations. And over 500 exhibits that have been placed on the Committee's website.

These allegations, if proven, would demonstrate that Mr. Rangel violated multiple provisions of the House Rules and federal statutes. As Judges we must determine whether these allegations were proven by "clear and convincing evidence."

On numerous occasions the Respondent, Mr. Rangel, has requested public hearings, a right that he is afforded under the Committee Rules. Today, this hearing affords him the opportunity to be heard. And as Judges in this matter it is our responsibility to make sure the process is both fair and dignified. As a former federal prosecutor in the Public Integrity Section at the Department of Justice due process is nothing new to me. It is guaranteed by our Constitution, and it is a responsibility I take very seriously.

So as we prepare to hear the evidence against one of our most tenured colleagues in the House, we need to ensure we have done everything we can to reassure the American public that we will handle this matter with the utmost professionalism and nonpartisanship that it deserves.

We can never forget that public office is a public trust. And with that I yield back.

#